

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to correct for lack of antecedent basis and to more clearly define the subject matter which Applicants view as the invention. Entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested. Claims 1-4 are pending.

**Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112**

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to correct for lack of antecedent basis and to more clearly define the subject matter which Applicants view as the invention. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103**

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,666,904 to Grindal.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Grindal in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,427,624 to Briggs et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Grindal discloses a teat cup for cows which is used in such a way that the end of the teat cup is fixedly attached to the base of a cow's teat by causing the teat cup to suction the teat. Thus, the teat cup is prevented from coming off the teat. Further, the teat cup of Grindal, as shown in FIG. 1, is a structure in which a connection 27 is connected to a pulsator to generate pulses within the space 29 so that the milking operation is carried out. Accordingly, the teat cup of Grindal has a double-walled structure.

In contrast, the teat cup of the present invention is a teat cup for laboratory animals. In periods other than the suction period and milking period, the pressure inside the teat cup is returned back to atmospheric pressure. Further, the teat cup of the present invention does not have a double-walled structure.

When used for milking, the teat cup of the present invention is fixedly attached to one teat with hands or a teat-cup attaching stand. In some cases, laboratory animals have to be milked intermittently everyday, every two or three days or more. However, mastitis with a congested or bleeding mammary gland could result if a teat is continuously stimulated by suction, and laboratory animals having mastitis cannot be milked. Thus, unlike the case of teat cups for cows, teat cups for laboratory animals cannot have a structure in which a teat is always kept suctioned into the teat cup for milking.

Furthermore, the internal structures of the two teat cups differ from each other. As discussed above, the milking of cows is carried out by causing a teat cup, having a double-walled structure, to suction the base of a cow's teat and applying negative pressure thereto.

In contrast, when it comes to the milking operation of laboratory animals, one cannot fixedly attach a teat cup to the base of an animal's teat by causing the teat cup to suction to the teat for the reasons discussed above. Thus, the teat cup for laboratory animals of the present invention has a structure in which the teat holding portion 74 is directly connected to a negative-pressure generating source. In addition, the positional relationship between the second conical portion 72, the third conical portion 73 and the teat holding portion 74 of the teat cup of the present invention also differs from that of Grindal.

Briggs fails to make up for the deficiencies of Grindal. Thus, Grindal and Briggs fail to anticipate or render obvious the present claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

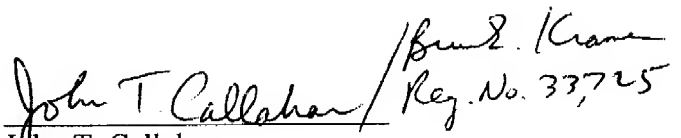
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